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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [ETTC](#) [UNSC](#) [IR](#) [AE](#)
SUBJECT: CODEL LOWEY WITH UAE FOREIGN MINISTER ON IRAN

CLASSIFIED BY: Richard Olson, Ambassador; REASON: 1.4(B), (D)

¶1. (S/NF) Summary. In a February 17 meeting, UAE Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan (AbZ) discussed Iran with a four-member Congressional delegation led by Chairwoman Nita Lowey of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Operations. AbZ told the Codel the nuclear issue is only one aspect of the Iran problem, and that Iran's regional meddling was a serious concern. He pledged the UAE's backing as the US rallies support for new sanctions but questioned whether they would achieve the desired effect. AbZ noted the UAE's growing concern that Gulf allies were being shut out of Iran sanctions planning. End Summary.

IRAN'S REACTORS AND REACH

¶2. (S/NF) AbZ began by expressing pride in the US-UAE 123 agreement and the bilateral relationship generally. According to AbZ, the 123 is a powerful example for the region and provides a transparent alternative to Iran's nuclear model. The UAE views Iran as a huge problem that goes far beyond nuclear capabilities. Iranian support for terrorism is broader than just Hamas and Hizballah. Iran has influence in Afghanistan, Yemen, Kuwait, Bahrain, the Eastern Province of KSA, and Africa (AbZ mentioned Nigeria specifically). Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez have close, cooperative ties. If Iran acquires nuclear weapons, the expeditionary aspect of its foreign policy will become ever more challenging for neighboring states.

POSSIBILITY AND FUTILITY OF SANCTIONS

¶3. (S/NF) Lowey asked what AbZ thought about tougher sanctions against Iran and how the UAE can help with China. AbZ said the US and its allies "have to decide how to stop Iran" and that the UAE was surprised at the Chinese attitude. AbZ noted the Emiratis and the Saudis have spoken to the Chinese, and the UAE expressed a willingness to expand its energy ties (Note: AbZ seemed to be indicating that this was intended as a carrot, but he acknowledged the difficulty of supplanting an Iran-China trade relationship that reached \$50 billion last year. End Note.)

¶4. (S/NF) AbZ urged quick action on tough new sanctions. The UAE is conscientious in its efforts to enforce existing UNSC sanctions but the Iranians have been able to find other routes, bypassing UAE ports, to import what they need. AbZ predicted that smart and

swift implementation of new sanctions could still be ineffective but said that we must try.

GULF NEIGHBORS FEELING LEFT OUT

15. (S/NF) AbZ highlighted a growing belief the UAE and the GCC are being left out of our Iran sanctions consultations. AbZ told Chairwoman Lowey that the P5+1 negotiations with Iran should be expanded to include the GCC. AbZ said there is a "trust barrier" to full GCC support for US policy, as there is a deep suspicion that the US is proceeding without consulting Gulf allies.

16. (S/NF) AbZ raised (as he likes to do regularly) the 2005 EU package offer to Iran that was briefed to the UAE by the Iranians, not the US or another ally. Things have improved since then, but "we still need some serious trust building between the US, the EU, and the GCC" on this issue. The DCM reminded AbZ (and the Codel) that there are extensive and privileged communications between the UAE and the USG on policy towards Iran and on sanctions planning. AbZ acknowledged there was trust from the UAE, but the rest of the GCC had continuing concerns. "Your problem today is to fix your relations with the GCC, quickly. A few countries in the region are already dealing with Iran as if they had the bomb."

17. (S/NF) AbZ said GCC states are left wondering what will happen to them in any deal the US and Iran reach through back channel conversations. He compared the current multilateral conversations over Iran's nuclear program with negotiations over North Korea's nuclear program, asking why North Korea's neighbors are part of the Six Party negotiations, but the GCC is not equally involved in similar conversations about and with Iran.

"WHAT IF?" SCENARIOS

18. (S/NF) In response to questions from members of Congress, AbZ said that if Iran goes nuclear others in the region will move forward on the same track and the nuclear nonproliferation treaty will completely break down. He said a crisis or confrontation in the region would create oil supply problems worldwide. 14 million barrels a day pass through the Strait of Hormuz. That said, he noted that the US and UAE militaries have plans to keep Hormuz clear.

19. (S) AbZ concluded the meeting with a soliloquy on the importance of a successful peace process between Israel and its neighbors as perhaps the most effective way of reducing Iran's regional influence.

110. (SBU) Members of Congress in attendance: Congresswoman Nita Lowey, Congressman Tom Cole, Congresswoman Barbara Lee, Congresswoman Donna Edwards.
OLSON